

# CYA

Delinquency Prevention Division

Special Edition

Fall 2002

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# Today

More Than 50 Years of Service to the People of California

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



**Jerry L. Harper**  
Director

One of the primary goals of the Youth Authority is to help young people develop into self sufficient young adults who are ready to make a positive contribution to society. As a department, we embrace this challenge and strive to create success stories in the youth we work with.

In the 1980s, when the Youth Authority was given responsibility for several delinquency prevention programs, it seemed a natural extension of what we do. Like the Youth Authority, community-based delinquency prevention programs are involved in, and committed to, creating success stories for the youth they work with. Some of the programs they use to achieve that goal include tutoring, mentoring, health and fitness, leadership development and life skills training. Through these and similar programs, they provide their kids an opportunity to develop into educated, healthy, self-confident young people.

At the Youth Authority we routinely look for success stories in our staff and the wards and parolees we work with. When we find them, it is always a pleasure to acknowledge and celebrate those successes. I have found similar pleasure in reading about the many success stories sent to us by delinquency prevention programs we support in communities throughout California. I hope you too will enjoy reading the stories and find in them a renewed motivation for the important work we do each day at the Youth Authority.



*Youth centers provide a variety of recreational opportunities for the children they serve.*

## California Youth Authority's Delinquency Prevention Division: An Overview

The Office of **Prevention** and Victims Services (**OPVS**) was created in 1992 to administer the California Youth Authority's (**CYA**) delinquency prevention and victim's services responsibilities. The Delinquency Prevention Division (**DPD**) is responsible for leading the Department's prevention efforts. The **DPD** takes on this task by providing grant funding and technical support for several delinquency prevention related programs throughout the State of California. The four established programs are as follows:

1. The County Correctional Facility Capital Expenditure and Youth Facility Bond Act of 1988 (**Proposition 86**) provided \$25 million in grant

*(Please see **CYA's Delinquency Prevention**, Page 6)*

## Words from the Office of

### Prevention and Victims Services...

As you read through the Third Annual Prevention Edition of *CYA Today*, you will meet some of the youth whose lives have changed or improved as a result of participating in one of the successful youth violence prevention programs the **CYA** helped fund.

We in the Delinquency Prevention Division of the **CYA's** Office of Prevention and Victims Services are extremely proud to work with such wonderful people/organizations and we are excited to share with you these individual success stories made possible through their efforts. We hope you will enjoy reading this issue as much as we have enjoyed producing it!

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## OPVS Staff Gather to Celebrate 10-Year Anniversary

Gathered at the recent 10-year anniversary celebration for **OPVS** are current and former staff. They are: (standing, l to r) Dori Yamamoto, Chris Hillman, holding baby Katelyn, Suzanne Neuhaus, Irene Reyes, Antoinette Valencia, Teri Hall, Sharon Garcia, Maria Cisneros, Kelly Perdue, Harvey Casillas, Milton Braswell, Leslie Keck, Ruby Soliz, Dorene Nylund, Elaine Stenoski, Karen Landry, Renee Adame and Holly Tran. Bottom row (seated, l to r) Monica Montanez, Kimberly Bushard, Carol Barker, Don Saylor, Sharon English, Kip Lowe, Cynthia Florez-DeLyon, Jill Weston and Rosemary Crisostomo.



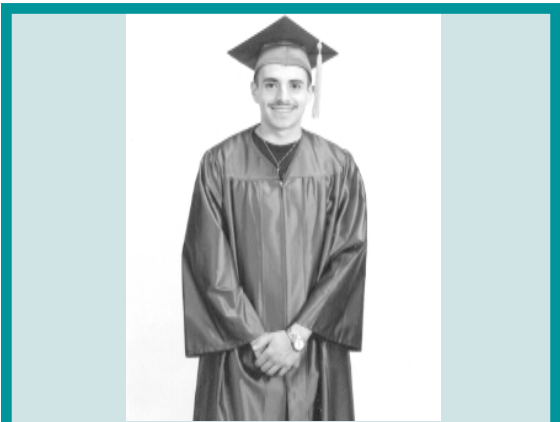
# La Familia Counseling Center....A Personal Story

*La Familia is a youth center in Sacramento that CYA helped fund through Proposition 86. La Familia provides an array of services for youth ages 6-17 including, recreation activities, tutoring, counseling, life skills, and other special events.*

**By: Oscar Chaves**  
*Participant, La Familia Counseling Program Sacramento*

I started out at La Familia Counseling Center, Inc., as a volunteer, not out of the goodness of my heart, but by a court order. I needed to complete 70 hours of community service and my probation officer referred me to La Familia, where I was assigned to assist with the after school tutorial/recreation program. Due to my arrest I had lost my driver's license and had to ride my bicycle 20 miles every day in order to get to La Familia and complete my "punishment."

When I first started off as a tutor I hated it. I tried figuring out any possible way to get out of it, whether it be forging my completion papers or bribing the right people. Back



*Oscar Chaves, a proud graduate of the La Familia Counseling Program, poses in his cap and gown.*

then I just wanted to kick it with my "homies" and do anything to have some fun; I just couldn't seem to fit volunteering into my schedule. Along with school and community service, it took my entire day from morning until night, so my time to kick it never started until 8 o'clock at night.

After a couple of months working in the after school tutorial/recreation program, close

to the time of completion of my community service, I didn't feel ready to leave. After helping out some of the young children at our program I felt like I was actually making a difference in their lives—whether it was teaching a young child how to do their homework or helping someone out with a personal problem they encountered at school or home. I started seeing how much of a difference it makes to young people when they have a positive role model in their lives. I remember growing up viewing my older friends as my role models, who were all mostly drug dealers and addicts, or the type who always seemed to be getting into trouble.

When you are young those are the types of people you see having the most fun with their lives--it's never the nerds that sit in front of the class and always raise their hands to answer the teacher's questions. I like the feeling when a child comes up to me and says, "Hey Oscar, remember me? You taught me how to add last year." Or when I get a "thank you" drawing or letter made by the children.

*(Please see La Familia, Page 8)*

## Tulare County Gang Violence Prevention Program Produces Winners



*Administered through the Office of Prevention and Victims Services, the California Youth Authority provides funding for two Gang Violence Reduction Programs (GVRP). The core elements of each program are gang conflict mediation, information sharing with local law enforcement, services for victims of gang violence, community service opportunities, and alternative activities to gang involvement for at-risk youth. Community Services and Employment Training Inc. (C-SET) is the lead agency for Tulare County's GVRP.*

Community Services and Employment Training Inc. (C-SET) and its partners have witnessed how the California Youth Authority's GVRP model has changed the lives of Tulare County youth. GVRP youth are becoming thriving and engaged members of their communities, and their communities are becoming safer and more vibrant places to live. Three success stories highlight the positive outcomes of improving opportunities for youth through a foundation of leadership development that incorporates gang mediation, alternative activities, victim awareness, information sharing, and community service.

### Jose Lara

**Jose Lara** is a high school senior living in Linnell Camp whose gang associations had led to problems at school and in the community. Drawn in by GVRP's community-based events and the appeal of some entertainment, Jose attended his first Jr. Leadership meeting in January 2001. Today, he is a proud graduate of C-SET's leadership program, a member of the program's Advisory Committee and committed to his educational goals.



*The finished mural (immediate left) was painted by Tulare Gang Violence Prevention Program youth to replace gang images. At far left, the crew at work on the project.*

During the first few weeks of the program, Jose was reserved and passive. As he learned that his opinion was valued, he gradually became more involved and offered suggestions and ideas. He demonstrated a genuine interest in the information shared by GVRP partners, including C-SET, Sheriff's gang unit, Probation, District

Attorney's Office, Tulare County Office of Education, youth centers, and schools. Although he was gaining an understanding that gangs would not provide him with a healthy future, he continued to display his ties to a southern gang *Varrio Compo Loco* by sporting a blue bandana in his shirt pocket.

C-SET's youth development coordinator Angel Avitia realized that Jose was experiencing a real change in March 2001, when Jr. Leadership Linnell Camp orchestrated a mural unveiling and Cesar Chavez Day celebration. Leadership members had worked with GVRP partners to replace a portion of a mural depicting gang members with more positive images. Jose, who had no public speaking experience, was one of the few who volunteered to speak at this event.

"Jose rose to the occasion as he shared his thoughts about the late farm labor activist in front of the entire community," remembers Avitia. "He was very proud of himself that day, and I was impressed with his speech as well as how far he had come." Jose had permanently shed the blue bandana.

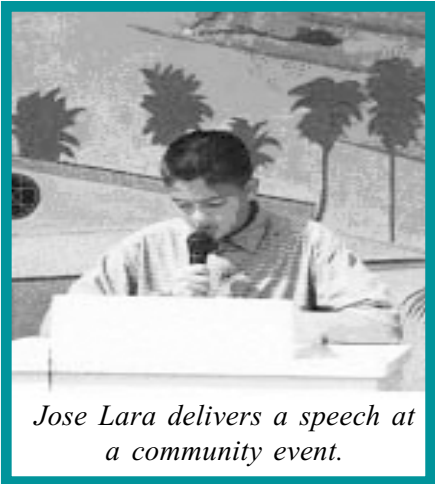
Through Jr. Leadership and GVRP, Jose has learned and practiced other tools for success. He learned the value of service to his community and realized his ability to positively influence other community members, his siblings, and even gang members. Jose was responsible for enlisting gang members to participate in the national *Make A Difference Day*, helping residents paint over graffiti, plant flowers, and clean up litter.

At home, Jose demonstrates his commitment to family by working alongside his parents in the fields each summer and counseling younger siblings to focus on school and stay away from gangs. Jose inspired his younger sister to join the Jr. Leadership program.

At school, he has turned around his educational performance, transferring from continuation to traditional high school and enrolling in adult school to complete his diploma. His future goals include earning a degree in criminology at College of the Sequoias and becoming a California Highway Patrolman.

"Jose has crystal clear goals and the dedication to achieve them," shared Avitia. "GVRP staff have watched him grow into a goal-focused, inspirational leader in both the program and his community."

*(Please see Tulare, Page 8)*



*Jose Lara delivers a speech at a community event.*



## Changing Lives, Building Futures at Oakland's Covenant House

***The California Youth Authority's Office of Prevention and Victims Services administers AB 2796 funds used for youth centers, such as Covenant House California Community Center in Oakland.***

Changing your life is not an easy task, but it can be done. That's what takes place every day at Covenant House California (CHC). Aaron, a 19 year-old African American youth, grew up in a large family with seven brothers and sisters. There were many problems in the home and the community where Aaron lived. Violence, drugs, and poverty were part of his everyday environment. As a young man Aaron spent time in prison, making it difficult to find employment. Although he found work that he enjoyed, he eventually lost his job because he lied about his felony conviction on his employment application.

Aaron was determined to change his life and help his siblings find stability. Aaron first learned about Covenant House California through his sister, Mary. His sister went to CHC's Community Service Center in Oakland seeking assistance with employment and housing. He became his own best advocate in getting

the help that he needed. Aaron was unwavering in his efforts to follow through with his case manager, even in the face of frustration and disappointment.

Through the assistance of Covenant House California's staff, Aaron is living in transitional housing and has plans to get his own apartment. He has a part time job and is actively applying for full time work. One of Aaron's dreams is to save money for an apartment and secure a better life for himself, his brother and sisters. Aaron will continue to get support from his case manager at the Community Service Center so that he can pursue his goals for himself and his family.

Covenant House California's Oakland Community Service Center provides a broad range of counseling, crisis intervention and prevention services to youth primarily between the ages of 14-22 years. Services include van transportation and school outreach, case management, educational/vocational training and employment services, sports, arts and cultural enrichment activities, basic needs—food, clothing and showers and referrals to additional resources.

## 'Taking Wing' Over Destiny's Highway: A San Diego Youth and Community Services Success Story

***San Diego Youth and Community Services (Storefront) is a transitional living shelter funded by Proposition 86 and administered by the CYA's Office of Prevention and Victims Services.***

Like too many young people, Sean Elliott didn't grow up in a nurturing environment. His home was only a place to be neglected—a place where physical abuse overshadowed family support.

Sean ran away from home and was on his own for nearly two years—crashing with friends, living on the streets, surviving any way he could. During that time he made a few attempts to go home, but found he wasn't welcome. He wandered aimlessly, got involved with drugs, and then discovered the Storefront.

The Storefront is a 20-bed emergency shelter—the only one in San Diego specifically designed for homeless and runaway youth. Its goal is to return young people to their families, or to find them

independent living arrangements and prevent their sexual exploitation. It's one of many programs overseen by San Diego Youth and Community Services.

Sean spent nearly three months at the Storefront, finding both shelter and resources that helped him bring his life into focus. He stopped using drugs. With the help and encouragement of the Storefront's staff, he was able to obtain his GED, even though he hadn't been to school in years. He created a resume in the shelter's computer center, and used that resume to get a job as a food server at Sea World.

It wasn't long before Sean became a role model for other young people at the Storefront. He began volunteering to lead group discussions with other homeless youth. They talked about issues that face "at risk" youngsters. Sean also ventured outside the shelter, working with the outreach staff to spread the word of the Storefront's

*(Please see Taking Wing, Page 6)*

## Nicole's Testimony: A Story that Comes Full Circle

***The California Youth Authority's Office of Prevention and Victims Services administers Proposition 86 funds awarded to programs such as the Economic Opportunity Commission (EOC) that provides services to homeless and runaway youth in Fresno County.***

Home is supposed to be a safe place where children are nurtured and encouraged to grow. Unfortunately, not all families are this way. My family was one of the dysfunctional ones—full of alcoholism and abuse. By the time I was 15, I had run away numerous times and had stayed with friends or in group homes. Counseling was provided for me, but not for the rest of my family, and the problem kept perpetuating.

One summer I decided to stay up at Bass Lake in a tent for almost a month. When I came back to Fresno the police were looking for me. They took me to the Sanctuary to get help. Although this was a brand new entity in Fresno, they were already helping many teenagers everyday get off the streets. The staff at the Sanctuary listened to my concerns and believed what I had to say. They sent my entire family for evaluation and then ordered the entire family into



*Today at age 25 and a college graduate, Nicole says Fresno County's Sanctuary Youth Shelter provided a safe alternative for her at age 15, when her life was troubled.*

counseling. Things did not improve right away, but I knew I could always go to the Sanctuary as a safe alternative to running away.

Eventually, my parents divorced and the abuse ended. I stayed in school finishing my high school diploma from Clovis West, got my AA degree from Fresno City College, and earned my BS from Fresno State in Community Health Education.

I am now working for the Count to Ten

Programs, Fresno County's domestic violence prevention program. Recently, I returned to the Sanctuary after ten years. I was so pleased to see how much they have expanded and how many teenagers they continue to help every day.

I see myself in so many teens these days and something has to be done to end family violence. I am very fortunate to have made it through and now I can be part of the solution. The Sanctuary Youth Shelter is a safe residence for children while family crises are resolved. The 24-hour emergency shelter serves youth experiencing personal, emotional, and/or family crisis.

***The Sanctuary offers a positive alternative to street life and homelessness. It is the only youth shelter in the valley and serves a 200-mile radius. Nicole is just one of the thousands of children who have found safety and shelter at the Sanctuary. It has been ten years since Nicole sought comfort and safety from the Sanctuary. A recent visit reaffirmed her commitment to ending domestic violence as she commented on how fortunate she is to have made it through and now can be part of the solution.***

# Alexandra: A Story of Hope and Promise in San Gabriel Valley

*West San Gabriel Valley Boys and Girls Club was awarded \$324,220 from Proposition 86 to renovate its facility and provide recreational and other creative activities to youth ages 6-17. These funds are administered from the CYA's Office of Prevention and Victims Services.*

When 10-year-old Alexandra joined the Boys and Girls Club in the fall of 2001, she was very quiet and kept to herself most of the time. She did not participate in many of the programs and never spent much time in either our homework room or computer lab. We never knew her to get into trouble, until one day when she was caught trying to steal a videotape from the library next door. Now we knew she wasn't

just a shy girl, she was a girl in need of some help.

In a staff meeting following her incident at the library, we discussed how we might be able to help change things for Alexandra. We knew the first step would be to get her involved in some of our small groups—what we like to call our “Positive Alternatives Program.” Positive Alternatives is, in turn, a part of our larger program called Project Learn. Positive Alternatives' staff enrolled Alexandra in two clubs: Torch Club and Go Girl--both national Boys and Girls Club programs.

Torch Club is a community service-oriented club for ages 10-13. Every week our Torch Club visits the MERCI School, that caters to children with special

needs. Our staff have found that when members help the children at MERCI, they learn empathy and gain a sense of usefulness and responsibility. This was definitely the case with Alexandra. Immediately after her first trip to MERCI, Alexandra was eager to return. She felt a sense of belonging and influence she hadn't felt before.

Our next step was to have Alexandra join Go Girls, a Nike-sponsored program that teaches young women about good nutrition, physical fitness and proper hygiene; all of these contribute to building self-esteem. Alexandra excelled in this program as well, becoming an example to other members in the group. It wasn't long before Alexandra was improving in other areas of Project Learn. She

started attending the homework room on a daily basis and attended a weekly computer class. In February, Alexandra was awarded “Member of the Month” for her good work in our Positive Alternatives program.

The positive changes in Alexandra's behavior and attitudes have been remarkable. She is visibly happier and more confident than before.

We feel confident that our prevention-based programs and one-on-one attention have been the catalyst for these changes. Alexandra is not the only member to benefit from these programs, but she is a shining example of what is possible for all the children who walk through our doors.

## Santa Barbara's Noah's Anchorage is Stabilizing Element in Young Life

*Noah's Anchorage YMCA in Santa Barbara, provides crisis intervention, emergency intervention and shelter, as well as counseling, case management and other services to youth and families. The program is funded through Proposition 86 and administered by the CYA's Office of Prevention and Victims Services. The following story illustrates some of the many youth that we have been able to help over the past year.*

A 14-year-old adolescent girl first came to Noah's Anchorage about a year ago. She had run away from home and was eventually picked up by the police and signed into Noah's Anchorage Shelter. Staff and the girl contacted her mother and set up a session to meet. The mother was very happy that her daughter was staying at the shelter, but was extremely overwhelmed with the difficulty of raising an adolescent. She was a single parent who worked as a nurse, so she was forced to be away from home at a variety of hours. She was having ongoing difficulties with her daughter refusing to follow her directions—consistently running away from home and experimenting with different drugs and sexual activity.

The girl was quite resistant to the shelter structure and, as a result, her initial shelter stays were quite brief. For several months

she fluctuated between going home and staying at the shelter. She generally felt comfortable coming to Noah's Anchorage when she wanted to run away, instead of staying on the street or with friends who her mother did not know. Noah's Anchorage staff continued to work with the girl and with her mother, assisting with counseling services and necessary referrals.

Finally, the girl and the mother reached a point where they felt unable to live together. The mother temporarily relinquished custody to Child Welfare Services. The youth was once again placed at Noah's Anchorage. This time, however, she was much more willing to work with shelter staff, get necessary help and to work on decreasing self-destructive behaviors.

She stayed at the shelter for a longer stay until she was eventually reunited with her mother and has stayed at home since that time. She is now actively involved in our Aftercare Program to give her family an added resource and to assist her in finding safe activities to join.

Although she and her mother still have difficulties, they are both committed to making changes and the staff at Noah's Anchorage continues to provide them with the necessary support to make that commitment a reality.

## Oakland's Boys and Girls Club Provides Positive Direction

*AB 2796 provided \$275,902 for renovation of the Boys and Girls Club of Oakland. This is a traditional Boys and Girls Club, with significant focus on homework and recreation.*

“I think I'm good at helping people deal with conflict in their relationships and that's why I want to study to be a psychologist and marriage counselor in college.” Those are the words of Boys and Girls Clubs of Oakland (BGCO) Junior Staff member Donisha Richardson, a member of the Ossian E. Carr Branch since the spring of 2000.

The ‘Carr Clubhouse’ opened its doors in December 1999, following a \$1.6 million dollar renovation that resulted in a brand new structure and space for more than 1,000 youth. The building was generously funded in part by the California Youth Authority who awarded Boys and Girls Clubs of Oakland a \$276,000 grant.

Donisha was one of many young people who made their way to the Clubhouse shortly after its opening. By late spring of the following year Club enrollment had soared to a high of 1,200 members. Today, Donisha is one of hundreds of girls and boys (ages 6-17) that frequent this branch. This is one of six branches that BGCO operates in Oakland.

Donisha considers herself a good student. When she joined the Club, after being coaxed by a friend who worked there, she was a

*(Please see Boys and Girls Club, Page 7)*



*As a Junior Staff member, Donisha Richardson works in the printing office at the Boys and Girls Club in Oakland.*



# Polinsky Center is Home Away from Home for ‘James’

*The CYA administers Proposition 86 funds used for youth shelters such as San Diego County’s Polinsky Children’s Center that provides services to runaway, abused and neglected youth.*

When asking a child about the Polinsky Children’s Center many different feelings seem to arise and rarely will you get the same reaction. Some of them are bad and others are good. There generally appears to be a variety of different experiences that children will always remember. One young man in particular was able to use Polinsky to his advantage and considered it his “home away from home.”

James (name has been changed to maintain confidentiality) was 11-years old the first time he entered the dependency system and got his first taste of Polinsky. “Dad” was nowhere to be found and “Mom” was a drug addict. He began this journey through “the system” with his older and younger brothers, but all were separated and took different paths. One has been successful in a foster home and the other has spent some time in juvenile hall, but was able to find his way back into a foster home.

During the nine years that James has been a part of the dependency system, he has developed many behavioral habits that caused him to believe he was fighting an up hill battle. James had difficulty attaching to adults along with being oppositional, physically and verbally aggressive towards adults and peers, and damaging the property of others. He frequently AWOLed when the situation became too difficult, or when he felt himself becoming too close to someone. Due to his behavior, James has experienced 28 placements, including foster homes and group homes. This does not include the nine times that he has passed through Polinsky’s doors.



*This is a typical scene in a youth center computer classroom. Many programs provide youth with opportunities to improve their technology skills.*

Regardless of what situation might have brought him back to Polinsky, James felt that he could always return and be accepted. He knew that this environment was predicable, and therefore it was safe. He would be able to count on supportive staff to provide emotional stability and whatever else he needed to get him back on track. He knew the staff well and was comfortable in this environment. He would always strive to do better each time he returned, whether it was becoming a mentor to younger boys in the cottage or assisting the facility coach with creating and running after school activities for younger children.

With the services James has received through his placements, as well as at Polinsky, he has grown from a child to a man. Such services included anger management training, individual therapy,

*(Please see Polinsky Center, Page 7)*

## Monterey Gang Violence Reduction Project: A Change is All You Need

*The Monterey County Gang Violence Reduction Project (GVRP) is one of two programs the Youth Authority funds to prevent and reduce gang violence.*

The California Youth Authority’s GVRP grant funding supports major efforts to help kids and their families have a chance for healthy change. Sometimes healthy changes are gradual, as in the case of a teenager I’ll call Martin. He used to live on the streets with an addict mother and 3-year-old sister. Martin, a 13-year-old foster child, was placed with a family in our community almost a year ago. At school, Martin was oppositional toward school staff and authority figures. He faced difficulties with course work and classroom behavior, and his anger frequently escalated into violence with classmates.

I think of Martin at school now and realize that we have walked a long road together, and somehow completed the hardest part of the journey without even realizing it. Martin is a different boy now. Through mentoring and participation in other GVRP activities, he has learned important lessons about himself and communicating with others. His grades have improved, conflicts have nearly stopped and he is beginning to understand the importance of focusing his energy on the things in his life he can control.

Sometimes the changes occur almost instantly, as in Rigo’s case. Rigo’s parents speak Spanish only, which is often typical among many of the parents of kids we serve. Rigo had irregular sleeping habits

and he tended to stay awake all night, even on school nights. His older brother is deeply involved in gangs, has been incarcerated, and has tried to involve Rigo in gang activities.

During a community-wide event, an Easter Egg Hunt, Rigo happened to be walking the streets out of boredom and decided to stop. It was only by chance that he began participating in a community service project. His responsibility was to help the youngest kids, some who could only just walk, negotiate through a wonderland of colors and finish the trip with plenty of eggs in their baskets. Something in the process of giving and helping the little tots resonated for Rigo. Afterwards, he was aglow. I still remember the over-sized smile on Rigo’s face when he explained, “It feels really good to help other people.”

Rigo started coming around regularly, offering to help with whatever was needed because it made him feel good. He also began participating in activities. Within a short period, Rigo has dramatically changed his life. He makes himself go to sleep early and he has restricted himself from participating in fun outings until he improves his grades. Through hard work and determination, Rigo has almost achieved a 3.0 grade point average. He has also developed a new relationship with his parents. He looks forward to turning 14, when he can get a work permit. He wants to earn money. As he put it, “Working in the strawberry fields is too hard for my mom, I have to get her out.”

## Perspectives from Clients of Humboldt County Young Men as Fathers

*Humboldt County Office of Education and the Juvenile Probation Department Partner for Success*

*Through the Office of Prevention and Victims Services the Youth Authority provides leadership for the cooperative partnership between the state, county probation departments, and county offices of education to deliver the Young Men as Fathers/ Parenting program to youth in juvenile halls and alternative schools. There are currently fifteen county programs throughout the state.*

Humboldt County Office of Education and the Juvenile Probation Department have partnered for the past four consecutive years to deliver the Young Men as Fathers Program in a unique manner that responds to the needs of this region. We have expanded the program’s prevention efforts to include all students that are incarcerated. Highlights of this program include the showcasing of important local resources with guest speakers from various local agencies and the success of the family activities and parent education component.

*(Please see Humboldt, Page 7)*

## Berkeley Youth Alternatives Finds the Key to Success for ‘Tiffany’

*Berkeley Youth Alternatives (BYA) is a youth center in Berkeley that was awarded funds through Proposition 86 and is administered by the California Youth Authority’s Office of Prevention and Victims Services.*

At age 14, Tiffany Green had what seemed to be a permanent scowl on her face that hid both her outer and inner beauty. When she entered a room, other kids as well as staff could immediately detect a negative attitude. Her negative attitude led to poor study habits and a lack of future focus—two factors that put her at-risk for delinquent behavior.

With resources from the California Youth Authority, as well as public and private sources, Berkeley Youth Alternatives began to work with Tiffany through a medium she understood—basketball. By initiating the nation’s first twilight basketball program for girls, BYA was able to work with Tiffany and other girls like her—encouraging them to

develop positive attitudes, improve their study habits, and stay out of trouble with the law. Every Friday night from 4-10 p.m. for four months during the year, Tiffany would attend mandatory workshops on topics such as pregnancy prevention, study habits, goal-setting, gang and crime prevention, as well as, drug and alcohol abuse prevention.

Now, Tiffany is a BYA Sports and Fitness Assistant, helping in the very programs that made her a success. Since June 2000, she has assisted with budget development and monitoring of all sports programs. She also helped develop educational workshops and sports activities for youth ages 6-18, programs that she benefited from when she was that age. Tiffany also helps BYA provide structured programs while improving her own knowledge of administration, sports marketing, non-profit management, event planning, and strategic planning. By using

*(Please see Berkeley Youth Alternatives, Page 7)*

## Sutter County’s Feather River Academy Provides Positive Mentoring

*Sutter County is one of fifteen counties the California Youth Authority funds to provide parenting education and mentoring services to at-risk youth.*

The Young Men as Fathers Program implemented at Sutter County Feather River Academy has been a collaborative effort with partners from county probation departments, juvenile hall, community-based organizations, colleges, training programs and business providing a seamless set of services to youth.

One member of the community, a chief financial officer for a major health foundation, provided mentoring for a troubled young man and changed his life. “Bill” was a tenth grader with poor social skills, no friends, and no respect for others. He had parents who care, but were unable to help him. “Bill” was expelled from the traditional high school and chose to attend the Feather River Academy (FRA) alternative school. It was clear that he had problems.

Before he left the classroom, he met a man who was to become his mentor. For the first time in his life he was accepted for who he was. He began spending time with his mentor on the golf course, volunteering with his mentor at community events, and taking a part time job at the local feed and grain barn. “Bill” gained a sense of self that allowed him to invite his mentor to go with him to FRA and give presentations to youth in two classes about the benefits and rewards of being a mentee.

His mentor stood by him and talked about the relationship and what it meant to him also. After the presentations, the classes gave a standing ovation for “Bill” and his mentor and for the first time, “Bill” felt welcome in their presence. He is now a respectful, well-mannered, and socially adept young man—with friends for the first time in his life. “Bill” no longer holds his head down, but looks you straight in the eye and talks to you!

## Taking Wing... *(From Page 3)*

resources on the street.

Karen Carne, the shelter’s Independent Living Skills Counselor, says Sean is “an amazing youth” who’s both “motivated and inspiring.” She says she has “complete faith that he will be a success in whatever he chooses to do in his life.”

While at the Storefront, Sean opened his own bank account and regularly saved almost all of his earnings from his Sea World job, in preparation for living on his own.

Today, Sean is living on his own, in a transitional living apartment complex called Take Wing (another program of San Diego Youth and Community Services). Thirty percent of his earnings are put towards paying his rent. He budgets the rest of his money to pay for the necessities of life. And, Sean just got some more good news. He’s been promoted to lead cook at Sea World.

Sean’s not wandering aimlessly anymore. He’s traveling down destiny’s highway with his head up and his eyes open.



*Youth at the Fontana Boys and Girls Club enjoy social and recreational opportunities that are available at a typical community youth center.*

## CYA’S Delinquency Prevention... *(From Page 1)*

funding for **Youth Centers** and **Youth Shelters** and the Juvenile and Gang Violence Prevention, Detention and Public Protection Act of 1998 (**AB2796**) provided an additional \$25 million to fund **20** more youth centers (e.g. **YMCA**’s, **Boys and Girls Clubs**, and **Police Athletic Leagues (PAL)**). Through these two programs, grant funds were allocated to counties and community-based agencies on a competitive basis for acquisition, construction, renovation and equipping of youth centers and shelters. The DPD administers these grants and provides technical support and monitoring of the youth centers and shelters. Youth shelters provide vital, immediate survival needs and primary care services to runaway or homeless minors and abused/neglected children. Youth centers play a critical role in developing essential protective factors in youth by suppressing gang activity and violence through positive program activities for thousands of at-risk youth.

2. **Gang Violence Reduction Projects (GVRP)** are grant-funded programs for which funds were administered on a competitive basis. These programs apply comprehensive strategies designed to allow for **safe** communities, reduce gang violence and provide youth with positive alterna-

tives to gang participation. Core elements of these programs are provided through collaborative efforts between community-based programs, schools, and law enforcement. The DPD currently monitors and provides technical assistance to these programs.

3. **Young Men as Fathers (YMAF)** Parenting/Mentoring Programs started in 1993 in various California Youth Authority institutions, camps and parole offices. Parenting education, **mentoring** and family activities were offered to train **youth** about positive parenting skills. The program is based on the premise that prevention of child maltreatment can lead to prevention of future delinquency. Funds were later awarded to other juvenile facilities and alternative schools in California counties. County programs are provided through collaborative partnerships between the CYA, county probation departments and county offices of education. The DPD provides training, technical assistance and monitoring of these programs.

4. Senate Bills 526 and 1700 (Hayden) were enacted in 1997 and

*(Please see CYA’s Delinquency Prevention, Page 7)*



## Humboldt.... *(From Page 5)*

The following are perspectives from participants of the Humboldt County Young Men as Fathers Program:

- “My son and I attended your program at New Horizons and at the Von Hall facility. We both benefited from your program in many ways. My son learned that as much as he thought he was ready to be a parent, he realizes he isn’t ready. He also learned a lot he didn’t know from the volunteers that came and spoke. I learned how important it is to have family time and communication. Your program is important to these kids and their parents. Thank you.”
- “...I’ve learned a lot of very useful information from the program--such as how to create a healthy trust foundation with an infant. I’ve also learned about prenatal care and the importance of keeping a pregnant woman healthy. I’ve also picked up a lot of information on what it takes financially, mentally, and emotionally to raise a child.”
- “I just finished a course on parenting. Through this experience I developed some goals. One of my goals is not to have kids until I am ready. And when I have kids I want to have a safe and stable home for them.”
- “Dear future child, I have gone through this program--they taught us different skills to raise a child. I will play music to you in my belly and read different stories to you. I want you to start developing your motor skills as early as possible. I learned about teaching signs so that you can make sentences. I will try to teach you to walk early. I will especially develop your bond and trust. You will only be cared for by me (your mom), your father, your aunts, and maybe a few other important people in your life. That will be until you are at least a year old.”
- “Young People as Parents has helped me realize that I DON’T want to have children until I am sure my family and I are in a lifetime relationship. I learned about ways to make love without doing it. I also know where to get condoms and places to get tested. I learned a lot about disease such as the top two, chlamydia and genital warts and I know how to prevent it. NO SEX. Thank you very much for your time. Please keep teaching—I learned a lot.”
- “Dear Mom, I have decided when I have a kid I’m going to support its mom the best I can. I have learned a lot in a class I took when I was locked up--I learned what could affect the kid by health issues. I want the best for my kid so I’ll support him/her with the finest, healthiest meals I can. I want the kid to be happy and smart. I will teach the kid and prevent things so that the kid doesn’t become harmed. Will you please teach and help me to prevent mistakes for your grandchildren’s future?”

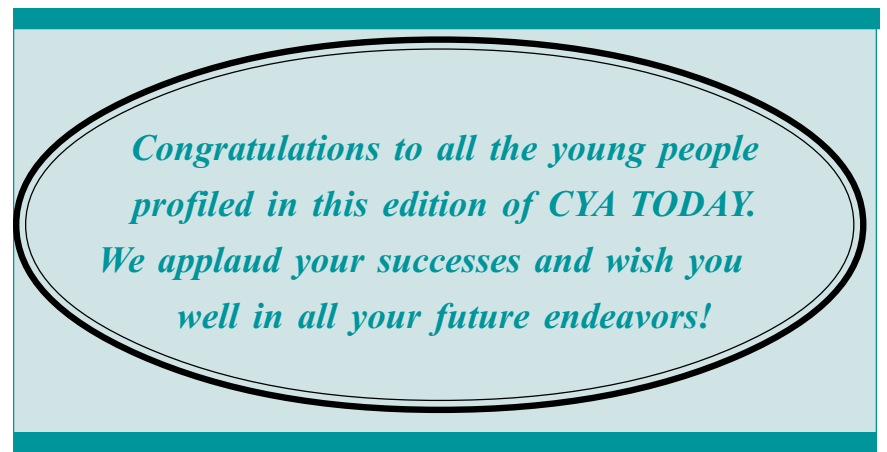
## Berkeley Youth Alternatives... *(From Page 6)*

her computer skills, Tiffany also compiles statistics and prepares reports for sports-related programs and maintains the department’s database of cellblock sweeps. Tiffany also conducted strip searches of female residents and prepared incident reports as needed.

While attending McNeese State University on a full athletic scholarship from 1996-2000, Tiffany received numerous awards and honors. She was voted the Women’s Basketball MVP 2000, the same year in which she became the All-Time Assist Leader for the University. Even more impressive, Tiffany was an Academic All-American two years, 1998 and 2000.

Recently, Tiffany was accepted into the law school program at Golden Gate University in San Francisco. She will be enrolling in the Spring 2003 semester.

This accomplishment is the culmination of hard work and dedication during the past ten years that may not have been possible without the support of Berkeley Youth Alternatives and the California Youth Authority’s investment in prevention activities for youth.



## Boys and Girls Club... *(From Page 4)*

sophomore with a 1.0 grade point average. Now heading into her senior year, her GPA is just over 2.5 (2.5 is the minimum requirement for Junior Staff membership) and science is her favorite subject.

Although she hopes to improve her GPA again this year, Donisha has already faced many challenges in her young life and has a plan to put herself through college no matter what happens. “I may even start taking classes for my cosmetology license while I’m still at Castlemont (high school),” she said, “I can work as a cosmetology trainee while in college.”

Donisha, who has two sisters and one brother entered foster care when she was around two years old and has not lived with her biological parents since then. She’s grown up living primarily with her maternal grandmother who is a licensed foster care parent. Two years ago, however, her grandmother suffered a major stroke and Donisha’s aunt and her daughter moved in to take care of both of them. Recently Donisha learned that her father died of a heart attack in 1990 on Christmas Day.

Over a year ago at the urging of program staff, Donisha joined BGCO’s “Keystone Club,” a character building leadership development program for teens. Besides working on those skills, the group does lots of great things. “We raise money through bake sales and sleepovers at the Clubhouse for kids—and we use the money to go places and see new things,” she says. “My favorite trip was to the Keystone Conference in Anaheim because we met different people from all over. We all went to a public school in Venice Beach to plant a school garden for the kids as our community project.”

“My aunt was telling me to get a job,” said Donisha, “and to be a junior staff I had to pull my grades up and become a member of Keystone. So I did.” Today she’s Carr’s 2002 Keystone President and especially enjoys running the meetings. She said that being a member of this group has helped her learn responsibility and has helped prepare her for employment as a Junior Staff member. As such, she serves as the membership clerk and supervisor of the game room. She also assists with the BGCO’s dance program teaching Hip-Hop to the younger members. Donisha is just beginning to explore her college options. She has completed BGCO’s Career Preparation Program and plans to seek advice from the Club’s Education Director. “The staff are all nice,” she said, “and I know they will be there when I need them.”

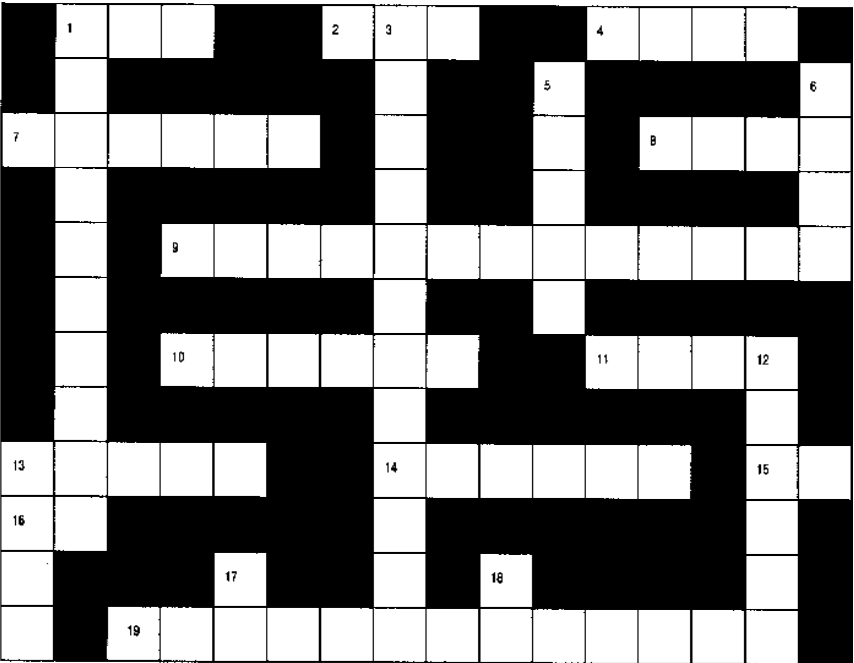
## Polinsky Center... *(From Page 5)*

Narcotics Anonymous meetings, Independent Living Skills training, a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) and a warm, friendly, and supportive home environment. James is seen as someone who is outgoing, articulate, athletic, a good role model for younger children, bright, personable and an advocate for others, as well as himself. He has gone on to better his life by joining Job Corps, where he will be able to gain vocational and educational training, in addition to housing and therapeutic services to continue a successful life path.

## CYA’s Delinquency Prevention... *(From Page 6)*

1998, respectively, in order to purchase several **laser**-tattoo removal machines and offer **Tattoo** Removal Programs. The objective of the program is to provide free tattoo removal services to **at**-risk youth and young adults, referred by probation departments, community-based organizations and Youth Authority staff, in order to enhance employment and educational opportunities. Programs have established partnerships with law enforcement, delinquency prevention agencies, educators and licensed health care professionals.

TRY THIS CROSSWORD PUZZLE TO  
TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF  
DELINQUENCY PREVENTION TERMS



ACROSS

1. Prevention program operated by local police departments. (Acronym)
2. State's youth correctional system. (Acronym)
4. Opposite of dangerous.
7. Someone you model yourself after.
8. Youth Authority funded gang program. (Acronym)
9. Places where abused/neglected, homeless youth can go to find services.
10. Last name of the Director of the Youth Authority.
11. Nationally recognized organization that provides recreational activities for youth. (Acronym)  
Hint: "Village People"
13. People who directly benefit from prevention programs funded by the Youth Authority.
14. Unwanted body art that is removed through this Youth Authority funded program.
15. Number of youth centers constructed, acquired, and renovated through Assembly Bill 2796.
16. Minnesota. (Abbreviation)
19. Legislation that provided \$25 million for Youth Centers and Youth Shelters in 1988.

DOWN

1. Method used to reduce juvenile delinquency.
3. Places where youth may go for recreational and other activities.
5. Method used for removing tattoos.
6. Branch where Youth Authority's Prevention and Victims Services responsibilities are performed. (Acronym)
12. Legislation that provided \$25 million for Youth Centers only in 1998.
13. Youth Authority funded parenting program. (Acronym)
17. Say "\_\_\_\_" to drugs.
18. Youth Authority prevention programs focus on "youth \_\_\_\_ - risk."

Most answers may be found in boldface type in the Page 1 article, "California Youth Authority's Delinquency Prevention Division: An Overview."

For Answer Key, See Below

Crossword Puzzle Answer Key

ACROSS

1. PAL
2. CYA
4. SAFE
7. MENTOR
8. GVRP
9. YOUTHSHELTERS
10. HARPER
11. YMCA
13. YOUTH
14. TATTOO
15. 20
16. MN

DOWN

1. PREVENTION
3. YOUTHCENTERS
5. LASER
6. OPVS
12. AB2796
13. YMAF
17. NO
18. AT

Tulare... (From Page 2)

Sylvia Avalos

Sylvia Avalos is a resident of the Woodville farm labor community, where youth and their families contend with the threat of drug and alcohol abuse, gang violence, and teenage pregnancy. The comprehensive strategies of GVRP gave Sylvia and other youth the tools they needed to avoid these negative influences and remain focused on their goals.

High school provided Sylvia with ample opportunities to excel, including Link Crew, a mentoring program that teams upperclassmen with incoming freshmen, Spanish drama club, cross-age tutoring, soccer and golf. However, no community-based opportunities existed prior to implementation of GVRP. As a member of Jr. Leadership Woodville, Sylvia has helped rid her community of graffiti, organized community clean-up days, and helped focus the energies of younger youth. Her initiative and active participation have helped shape the kinds of community-wide activities that Jr. Leadership provides in Woodville, such as the youth-organized Cinco de Mayo celebration.

Sylvia graduated in June and has been accepted by the University of California at Berkeley, where she plans to study accounting. Her leadership, perseverance, and determination to succeed have provided a positive example for other GVRP youth. GVRP provided her with the means of counteracting the negative influences around her.

"She has proven to everyone that living drug-, alcohol- and gang-free is the way to go," explained Lily Rivera, C-SET neighborhood coordinator. "Sylvia knows and shares with others that you don't need those things to feel good or make friends. What you do need is to keep focused on your dreams."

Luisana "Chana" Valencia

Luisana "Chana" Valencia joined Jr. Leadership Ivanhoe at 13 years old. Her history already included drug use, gang involvement, and homelessness. Chana bears the responsibility for caring for her entire family. She provides transportation for her older siblings, cares for a 6-month old sibling, and ensures the household bills are paid. While Chana's intelligence, sense of responsibility, and charisma helped her survive adversity, GVRP's Jr. Leadership program gave her the opportunity to channel these traits in positive ways. "She could encourage and convince her peers to join GVRP, youth who would not normally consider joining such a group," explained Diva Larez, C-SET youth development coordinator in Ivanhoe.

Chana is now 15, a graduate of Jr. Leadership Ivanhoe, and serves as Head Advisor of the leadership program's Advisory Committee, that supports and mentors new Jr. Leadership members. She has spearheaded at least three major community-wide events, effectively facilitated meetings, and sees her ideas through to project completion.

The program's emphasis on education and tours of college campuses has benefited Chana as well, as she is determined to graduate high school and attend college. GVRP has broadened her horizons and inspired her dream to travel and see the world.

La Familia... (From Page 2)

Once my hours were completed, I was asked to take a paid position as a tutor--I took the job. I continued riding my bicycle 20 miles a day and was doing it on my own free will. I could easily have gotten another job closer to town, but I wanted to work in a place where I could feel better about myself after a days work.

Currently, I am still working at La Familia and have moved up to Supervisor of the after school tutorial program. Recently, my best friend asked me, "Wouldn't it be great if you could take back everything that happened that night, when you got caught up?" I thought about what he said for a minute and then responded, "This whole experience has actually changed my life for the better, I wouldn't change a thing."

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